



THE PAIN GODS

Science Fiction Prototype

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Presented CS'16 on 11/09/2016



ABSTRACT

- The SFP *“The Pain Gods”* describes a futuristic world where Singularity has been achieved and robots with superior intelligence run all aspects of society. One man creates a set of contact lenses which allow the wearer secrete a hormone which triggers positive memories.
- The story illustrates an emotion-driven approach to designing prototypes for future innovation.
- This story is a example of how future-casting can be used to develop emotion-driven products which directly satisfy a demand for innately personal products.



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KEYWORDS

- Singularity
- Robotics
- Dementia
- Human-Technology Innovation (HTI)
- Artificial Intelligence
- Future-casting
- Semiotics



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HUMAN-TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION (HTI)

- Human-Technology Innovation is a key aspect of the SFP *“The Pain Gods”* as the term describes an example of humans being a central figure to all technological developments.
- This tool is a relevant part of all aspects of the fictitious society which is depicted in this SFP.
- Humans work in companies run by the robotically-evolved Pain Gods in order to solve technical problems, submitted by humans.
- It is this human-driven need for technology which leads the protagonist to see the need for such an emotive prototype.



FUTURE-CASTING

- Future-casting describes the new-age term for a well-known practice.
- This involves the act of human imagination working to it's fullest by imagining future situations.
- It is these fantasies and fictions which allow the creation of prototypes which aid the betterment of humankind.
- The protagonist serves as an example for all men and women, by looking to the society around him and imagining a better future, which holds a product to aid dementia patients around the world.



TECHNOLOGICAL SINGULARITY

- Technology Singularity describes the well-known concept of a point in time, when technology will have a 'run-away' effect and will be able to build upon its own intelligence, infinitely. Due to this, it is almost impossible to predict the every outcome of this.
- Singularity is exceptionally important for the SFP *"The Pain Gods"* as the Pain Gods themselves, are influential characters, have achieved this intelligence and now act in an intimidating fashion towards the remainder of the human race.
- There are many depictions of Singularity in action throughout literature and film, yet this particular portrayal reflects an undesirable future and warns us of the dangers of artificial intelligence, whilst offering us hope that at some point in the future, humans will be creating such products with speed and effectivity.
- This ever-accelerating rate of technological growth is unlikely to reach a standstill and it was this knowledge that offered the encouragement for depicting a future where Singularity has had many generations in which to evolve.



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THE PAIN GODS – PLOTLINE

- The main character is a man called Ivan Lightwood who lives with his girlfriend, Rose, and their one cat. They have been together for nearing five years.
- Ivan works in a penthouse office for the Pain Gods solving technical difficulties submitted by fellow humans.
- Ivan suffers from chronic pain and during his work hours, he receives a drug which he inhales from a gas tank that both alleviates his pain and clears his mind, enabling him to work more effectively.
- Ivan's girlfriend chooses to leave him due to his heavy work schedule and her mother's worsening dementia. She feels both unsupported and unimportant in Ivan's life.



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THE PAIN GODS – PLOTLINE

- Ivan suffers a severe emotional decline from the loss of Rose and he racks his brain thinking of ways to win her back. He becomes obsessive and unhinged in doing so.
- He uses his superior intelligence and his technical logic from working with the Pain Gods, to develop a set of contact lenses that will help Rose's mother recall her happiest memories by secreting a memory-triggering hormone.
- Ivan approaches the Pain Gods in order to patent his prototype.
- He fails, however, when he is told that he has depleted their funds of the pain-killing drug. Due to this, they take control of his contact-lenses prototype.



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THE PAIN GODS -PLOTLINE

- Ivan makes contact with Rose, after his discussion with the Pain Gods, but is rejected once more.
- As a direct result of this, Ivan chooses to take his own life.
- He gasses himself in his kitchen, whilst wearing the contact lenses and reliving his most precious memories; all of which involve Rose.



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MOTIVES FOR WRITING THE SPF

- The short story "*The Pain Gods*" describes a dystopian society, which is inherently negative and imbalanced, as both power and prosperity reside with the Pain Gods.
- This negative view is due to the third-person close by point of view which follows Ivan Lightwood through an emotional upheaval.
- The authentic realisations which Ivan comes to, using HTI, robotics and semiotics, allow an example for all future emotion-driven design. With this new-found technology type, a society emerges that is adaptive and flexible in all ways. This opens a door of a new range of technology that can truly satisfy all needs; emotionally and physically.
- Here, we can see the direct and obvious advantage of the SFP. By using SFPs we are not restricted to one type of future-casting, but to all types; both unpredictable and otherwise.



SFP VS. SCENARIOS AND VISUALISATIONS

- Generally, all methods of assessing any form of writing involving prototypes of innovation are limited and concise for the situation involved. Due to this, any assessment is lacking.
- This particular story's SFP method is uniquely different to most others, as it flows in a lyrical manner with flowing sentences. The technology is interwoven into the protagonist's purpose in a fluid manner.
- Technology does not take a priority in the story, but shares centre-stage with plot and character development.
- This story is equally unique in its manner of not describing the prototype's development in painstaking detail. The details described are effective and have the effect of allowing the reader to expand their images personally.



DESIGN AND OUTLINE

- The story's design and layout is key towards the plot's functionality. The story has the outward appearance of being a dystopian tale, and the plot moves swiftly.
- There is an eerie atmosphere (excelled by the introduction of the Pain Gods as characters) to the entire story which increases as the plot intensifies. The technological complexities also increase as the plot progresses.
- The SFP moves through motions of the protagonist; Ivan is happy in his job with the Pain Gods → Ivan is unhappy despite a progressive job → Ivan builds the prototype of the product → Ivan is unable to see the benefits of his prototype, thus his resulting unhappiness.



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THE FUTURE OF DYSTOPIA

- The future of Dystopian literature may prove to be a useful if not unorthodox tool for the case of SFP. Dystopian stories offer the opportunity for seeing a future both worth creating or avoiding.
- We can learn lessons from these types of SFPs which allow room for both cautious action and excitable creativity. With this means of writing, there is no aspect of futuristic-thought left untouched. Nor is any aspect of negative technology functionality left unvisited, thus mistakes are more easily avoided.
- Dark, futuristic worlds offer the unlimited amount of opportunities for creative speculation.



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THE CREATIVE WRITER'S APPROACH – PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

- As neither a technologist, nor an engineer it can often times be difficult to understand the importance of writing SFPs without the technological information in which to back up stories with the correct logic.
- It is at the these times important to remember that the future does not evolve logically; nor does it answer to any one discipline of learning.
- It is my belief that it is only when all disciplines of learning, by that I mean science, engineering, humanities and arts, unite that we will gain a clear picture of the likelihood of our prospective future.
- Thus, all SFPs are important and unique in what they tell us of the future. There an a limitless number of avenues of thought which we have yet to explore, but with SFPs, we know that we someday will.



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A HOPEFUL NEW GENERATION

- During an Irish summer school, involving children between the ages of eight and eleven, Science Fiction Prototyping was introduced. This school was a part of the Centre of Talented Youth of Ireland (CTYI).
- The children were immediately receptive to the idea and expressed a wish to practice freewriting. Freewriting is the writing practice of unconsciously writing without thought or fear of judgement, within a certain period of time.
- The children worked in silence for thirty minutes crafting their personalised futuristic worlds. The results of their prototypes were astonishing. For example, there were new-age breathalysers created to test one's mineral and vitamin composition and robots entirely used for farming skills to aid the elderly in Ireland.
- The students continued to work on their stories over the next few weeks, and incorporated complex plots, characters and purposes into their tales. Each story told perfectly fits the description of a Science Fiction Prototype.



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THANK YOU

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share a piece of myself with you and thank you, for sharing in return.

May we all once day thank each other for helping to create a future, from which we will never need a set of contact lenses to escape.